

**WASHINGTON, DC** –“ Congressman Joe Courtney today lauded the U.S. Veterans Administration (VA) for issuing new rules that will make it significantly easier for veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to receive disability benefits. Under the new rules, veterans suffering from PTSD will only need to document that they have served in a war zone under conditions consistent with their PTSD claim. Prior to the fix, veterans had to document precise incidents that caused the trauma – a difficult and cumbersome task for many.

Congressman Courtney has repeatedly called for the change – which could affect hundreds of thousands of veterans from wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Vietnam. He is also an original cosponsor of the COMBAT PTSD Act, H.R. 952, which would have clarified the meaning of “combat with the enemy” to include deployment in a war zone for purposes of service-connection of disabilities.

“This rule change is long overdue,” **said Congressman Courtney**. “For too long, veterans suffering from PTSD have had to jump through impossible hoops to prove what was already an established medical fact – serving in a war zone often causes PTSD. Similar to the COMBAT PTSD bill I strongly supported, the VA’s new rule will benefit all veterans by eliminating the backlog of contested PTSD cases that is clogging the system. More importantly, it establishes a fair way to treat PTSD claims. PTSD is a normal reaction to an abnormal situation, and with the high rate of redeployments and the irregularity of enemy threats, PTSD should not require documentation of a specific incident to trigger eligibility.”

The new VA rule will take effect as early as Monday, July 12. Although it may open the system to new claims, the VA will still review all claims for veracity to weed out fraudulent claims.